GREEN AVATION PRESS CONFERENCE AT DCAs

Remarks for Administrator Bolden

February 29, 2016

Thank you very much and happy leap day. We love leap years at NASA because we're all about making giant leaps for the benefit of everyone. I truly believe that 2016 is going to be a tremendous year for giant leaps – and say this in terms of aviation, which we're here to discuss today, as well as space exploration and our Journey to Mars.

I'm joined today by Dr. Jaiwon Shin, NASA's Associate Administrator for Aeronautics Research and David Melcher the CEO of the Aerospace Industry Association: AIA.

We're here today to talk about NASA's work to make flight cleaner, greener, safer and quieter – all while developing aircraft that travel faster – and building an aviation system that operates more efficiently.

There's a certain excitement about being able to discuss the future of flight with DCA as a backdrop. People from all walks of life – and all corners of the globe surround us. Every time they take off and land, they are contributing to some $1.5 trillion with a T in economic activity that's fueled by American aviation.

Of course, each takeoff and landing represents more than just dollars and cents. It represents families with food on the table thanks to the 12 million jobs supported by American aviation. It represents businesses connecting with businesses in a world that's growing smaller by the day. It represents old friends being reunited … a grandparent attending the wedding of a grandchild … a patient awaiting an organ … an entrepreneur shipping out the first batch of new products…scientists traveling to collaborate …diplomats working to bring peace to our troubled world.

With so much riding on the wings of our aircraft, we at NASA take our responsibility very seriously.

I am so proud of our employees, contractors, and partners whose work is why we're able to say "NASA is with you when you fly." They and their predecessors are the reason why every U.S. aircraft and U.S. air traffic control tower has NASA-developed technologies on board.

Now, I'm not the only one who has a lot of faith in the ingenuity and ability of the people of NASA. President Barack Obama has made a very bold statement about the respect and belief he has in NASA's work.

The President is calling for a new $3.7 billion investment in green aviation – that in a very real sense, is also an investment in all of us.

I would argue that every American is poised to benefit from some way in this investment, because all of us have a stake in breathing cleaner air or living in a country where more of our neighbors are working in stable, well-paying jobs.

As our climate continues to change, we all have a stake in building a future where we fly on aircraft that consume half as much fuel, that generate only one quarter of current emissions and that make use of greener energy sources in the first place.

With global air passenger traffic projected to double over the next couple decades, it's best for all of us that we find new ways to absorb billions of new passengers without compromising the safety of our skies …

Every American has a stake in bringing about a future where our airports are better neighbors because aircraft operate as much as 42 decibels quieter – and therefore the noise at airports like DCA, IAD or BWI is contained within the airports' boundaries….

… A future where people can travel to most cities in the world in six hours or less in an airplane that flies faster than the speed of sound over land with hardly a hint of a sonic boom.

If all this sounds like science fiction, well that's why I like to say that the people of NASA turn science fiction into science fact; we make the impossible possible.

The President's proposal would allow Team NASA to do just that … from aviation energy efficiency to a transformation of propulsion systems to improvements in aviation mobility … this investment will allow us to make giant new leaps.
I'd be remiss if I didn't also mention that our researchers projected – even before this investment – that we could save the commercial airline industry as much as $255 billion over twenty-five years through the green aviation technologies NASA is helping develop.

Just think of what we'll be able to do for our economy with the additional resources the President is proposing!

With this in mind, I want to highlight one of the exciting things that the President's proposal will allow us to propel forward: partnering with industry to build a series of experimental aircraft or "X-planes."

Along these lines, I have an exciting announcement to make.

Nearly 70 years since Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier in the Bell X-1 as part of the N-A-C-A's high-speed research, today NASA is awarding a $20 million preliminary design contract for a low-boom flight demonstrator aircraft to a team led by the Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company in California, which also includes GE Aviation in Ohio and Tri-Models, Inc. also in the Golden State.

This first X-plane will be called QueSST, for "Quiet Supersonic Technology" – and here's the magical part: the design is for a piloted test aircraft that can fly at supersonic speeds but create a sonic boom that's more like a soft thump instead of the annoying "boom" that currently prohibits commercial supersonic flight over land.

In scientific and technical terms I believe that's called "a big deal."

Perhaps the best news of all, is that this only the beginning. With that in mind, let me call upon Dr. Shin to say a few words …